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WORKING PAPER

CHARLESTOWN

Background Information, Planning Issues and Preliminary Neighborhood Improvement Strategies

City of Boston
Boston Redevelopment Authority
District Planning Program

Spring, 1975

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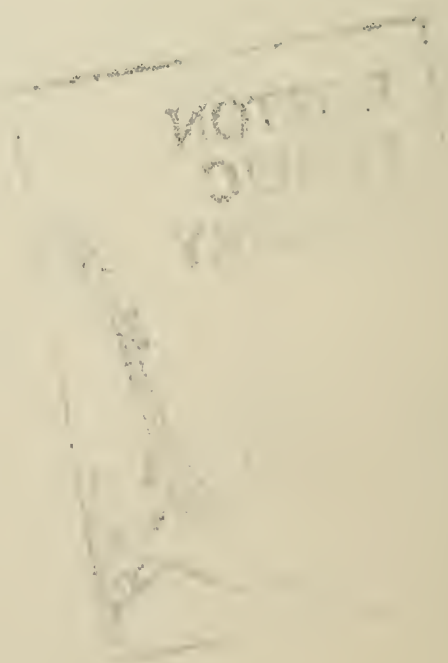

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INTRODUCTION

This report, prepared by the Charlestown district planners, is a draft document meant to forms the basis of discussion among residents and city representatives on planning strategies and investment needs.

The report does a number of things:

First, it establishes a base of population, income and housing data as well as a listing and analysis of recent past public and private investment in Charlestown. This information can be used by the district planners and others who are involved in the planning process, neighborhood residents, Little City Hall staff and other city agencies and departments.

Second, it offers an analysis of the major issues which confront the community along with recommended strategies. These strategies should form the basis of discussion for community residents for the Community Development Block Grant and Capital Improvement participation process as well as for involvement in issues which are not addressed by city expenditures such as rezoning, private development and programs funded by the state.

Third, the report recognizes that strategies are not self-fulfilling and makes recommendations for investments, both public and private, which are necessary to help carry through the recommended strategies.

CHARLESTOWN

SHORT HISTORY

Charlestown was settled before Boston in the early seventeenth century and developed separately from Boston until it was annexed in 1874. It was already a thriving harborside community by the time of the Revolution, during which the British burned the entire town in the 1775 Battle of Bunker Hill. The town was rebuilt, however, and once again flourished as a port. During the Golden Age of Sail, many wealthy captains and shipowners built grand houses for themselves and their families on the hillsides of Charlestown near the harbor. As the Boston Naval Shipyard was developed as the nation's second navy yard, a mixture of industry and port-related activities was established which continues to this day. The introduction of industry triggered the development of large sections of tenement housing for the workers. Most of this housing was built in areas removed from the Harbor.

During the period of great migration from Europe (especially from Ireland) in the late 1800's, and again around the time of World War I, these working class houses became the overcrowded first homes of many immigrants. Improved transportation connections with Boston, most notably the elevated transit line constructed at the beginning of the twentieth century, made Charlestown an even more attractive site for working class housing. At the same time many of the wealthy old Charlestown families moved out of the town to other areas.

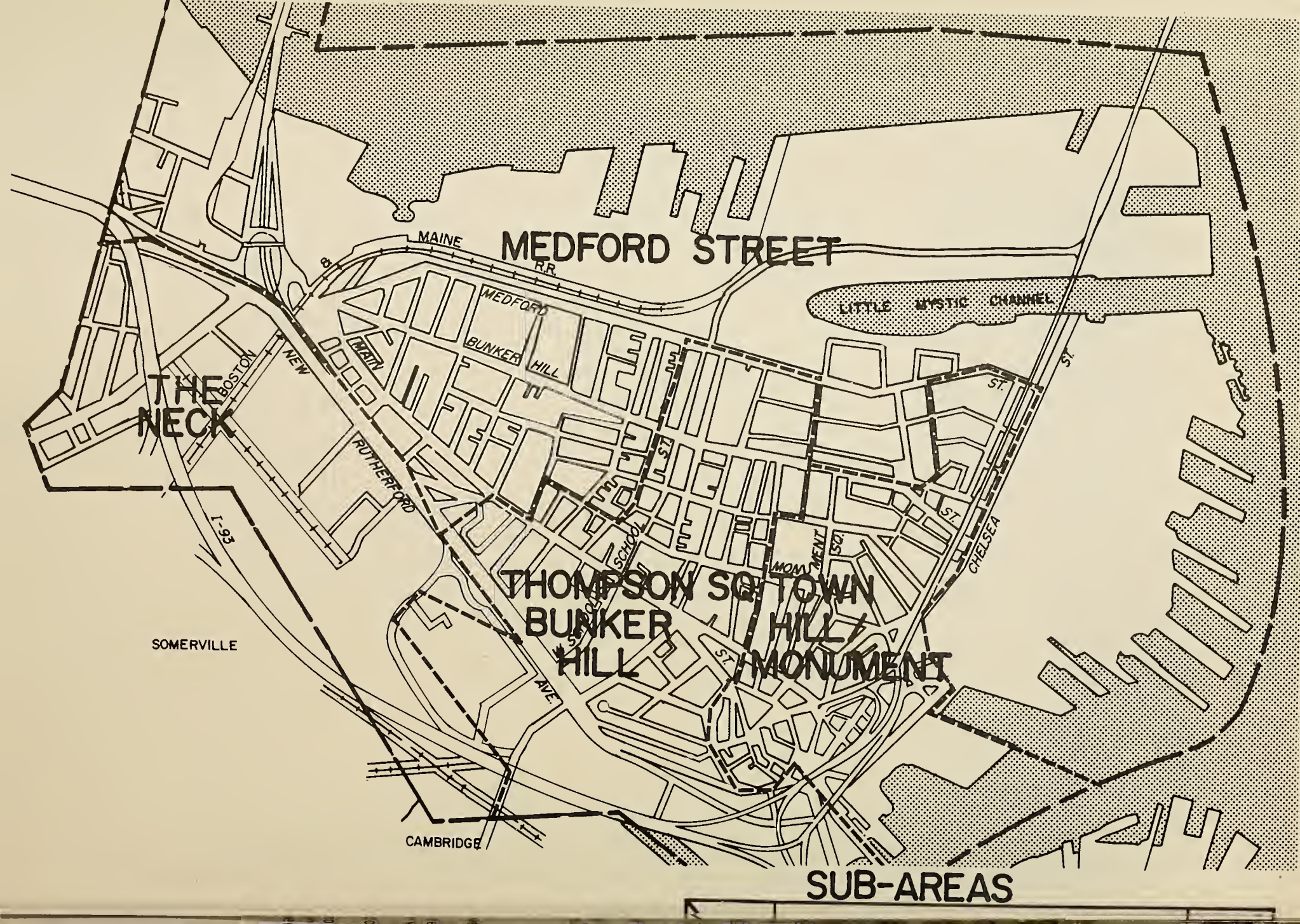
The demand for ships generated by World War I increased activity at the shipyard, which in turn put new pressure on the existing housing stock. During this period many homes were converted to rooming houses to meet the demands of workers new to the town and crews stationed here while their ships were being repaired. The concentration of lower income immigrants, transient workers and sailors living in the town gave the neighborhood a rough and dangerous reputation. The Depression which followed the boom of wartime activity accelerated the process of deterioration caused by overcrowding and neglect. The population began a long decline which, except for another rooming house period during World War II, was not broken until the implementation of redevelopment under the Urban Renewal Program.

The Urban Renewal Plan began to be formulated in 1960 and was approved in 1965; implementation is now nearing completion. Originally, it was recommended that over half the dwelling units in Charlestown be demolished because of their deteriorated condition. Before the final plan was accepted, however, residents and planners revised the plan so that fewer than 600 dwelling units were demolished and the neighborhood's character and the majority of its structures have been preserved.

Since 1965, renewal activity and the availability of low interest rehabilitation loans and grants have attracted new residents to Charlestown, who have sought out and rehabilitated many of the fine houses which remain from the time when Charlestown was the home of ship captains and wealthy merchants. As a result, rents and sales prices have increased in certain areas of the town. Two housing markets actually exist; on the same street long time residents may rent apartments to other long time residents for $70-$90 per month, while newer neighbors may rent similar space which they have renovated for $200 or more. Although most areas of Charlestown have experienced some of the influx of newer residents, the heaviest concentration is in the vicinity of the Bunker Hill Monument, Monument Avenue, and adjacent areas to the south and east.

B. EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

Information on population and housing in this report was derived from the 1960 and 1970 U.S. Census. Four sub-areas of Charlestown have been designated for further analysis: Town Hill/Monument (1970 Census tracts 401 and 402), Thompson Square/Bunker Hill (403 and 404), Medford Street (405, 407 and 408), and the Neck (406).


MEDFORD STREET
MAINE R.R.
LITTLE MYSTIC CHANNEL
MEDFORD
BUNKER HILL
MAIN
NEW BOSTON
THE NECK
RUTHERFORD
I-93
SOMERVILLE
CAMBRIDGE
SCHOOL
MONUMENT SQ.
THOMPSON SQ.
BUNKER HILL
TOWN HILL
MONUMENT
CHELSEA
ST.
AVE.
SUB-AREAS

Comparative Statistics--Charlestown
Census Data

n	Town Hill-Monument	Bunker Hill-Thompson Sq.	Medford St.	The Neck	District	City
0	4,112	5,204	5,603	434	15,353	639,803
om	-16%	-26%	-28%	-43%	-25%	-8%
ck	40	4	32	0	76	104,206
ck	3	2	29	2	36	63,165
1970	431	569	663	39	1,702	81,437
om	-16%	-18%	+34%	-43%	-4%	-5%
ouples dren	361	526	533	39	1,459	68,873
	506	681	651	91	1,929	83,101
from	-28.7%	-22.8%	-18.1%	-57.1%	-24.4%	-17.1%
nily	$6,952-11,522	$8,612-8,956	$6,196-10,100	$7,406	$6,196-11,999	$9,000-11,522
s	23%	26%	18%	43%	29%	22%
ling	1,342	1,731	1,895	151	5,119	232,856
ing r	529	654	1,042	48	2,273	67,102
pied	28%	30%	32%	41%	30%	27%
dition same	Strong	Stable	Stable	Moderate	Strong	Stable
	57%	59%	62%	42%	59%	50%

TOWN HILL/MONUMENT

The Town Hill/Monument area is the southern section of Charlestown. It includes City Square (the entrance to the town from Boston proper), the recently constructed Kent Community School, three historic parks (Bunker Hill Monument, John Harvard Mall, and the Training Field), and a portion of the Bunker Hill housing project. Residences in the area are predominantly three and four story brick row houses built in the nineteenth century. A group of residential streets (among the oldest in Boston) located in the southernmost portion of the area, known as Town Hill, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Town Hill/ Monument area has experienced the greatest influx of new residents in Charlestown; and many of the larger houses in the area, which had been converted into rooming houses during the periods of booming activity in the navy yard, are now being reconverted into one-, two- and three-family dwellings. Although a great deal of rehabilitation has taken place in the area since the inception of urban renewal, 529 dwelling units (more than a third of the area's total) required over $1,000 fix-up in 1973. Rehabilitation activity has been steadily continuing since then, however, and is expected to increase after the elevated line is removed from Main Street and City Square is redesigned. In 1970, 28% of the area's dwelling units were owner-occupied, a proportion close to that of both the Charlestown district and the city as a whole. While the district as a whole lost a quarter of its population between 1960 and 1970, the Town Hill/Monument area experienced a 16% decrease, the lowest percentage of population decrease in the town. 57% of the people living in the area in 1970 had lived in the same residence for five or more years; this percentage is higher than that for the city as a whole, but slightly less than the district-wide percentage of 58%. Although this section has the highest median income in the town ($6,952-11,522), 23% of its families had incomes under $5,000 in 1970. This statistic may be explained in part by the fact that the area includes a section of the low-income Bunker Hill housing project. Despite the influx of new residents, the area continues to house many long-time residents and roomers.

THOMPSON SQUARE/BUNKER HILL

The Thompson Square/Bunker Hill area is centrally located in the town, to the west of the Town Hill/Monument area. It includes the traditional center of commercial activity in Charlestown as well as the site for the new shopping center, the Bunker Hill Community College, the new library, the MDC skating rink, a section of the Bunker Hill housing project, and the recently completed low and moderate income 236 housing development, Mishawum Park (not occupied during 1970 Census). The area has the highest percentage (65%) in the district of single and two-family dwellings. Most of the residences are two-, three- or four-story row houses, predominantly brick in the southwestern portion and wood frame in the northeastern portion. Although the majority of buildings in the area are in good or fair condition, some in the immediate vicinity

of the Bunker Hill housing project show signs of deterioration. A survey indicates that 654 dwelling units (over a third of the area's total) required fix-up over $1,000 in 1973. The dismantling of the Elevated on Main Street and the continued availability of rehabilitation assistance are expected to spur an increase of both commercial and residential rehabilitation activity. The area shows signs of residential stability; 30% of the dwelling units are owner-occupied, and 59% of the people living in the area have resided in the same house for five or more years. The median income for the area ($8,612-8,956) is about average for the district. 26% of the area's families had incomes under $5,000; this includes a section of the Bunker Hill housing project. The area, like the district as a whole, lost about a quarter of its population between 1960 and 1970. The area has experienced slightly less of the influx of new residents than the Town Hill/Monument area, and continues to be predominantly working class families.

MEDFORD STREET

The Medford Street area is the northernmost section of Charlestown. It includes the Naval Shipyard, a variety of industrial and port-related uses (including Boston's primary containerport), Sullivan Square, two major playgrounds (Ryan and Doherty), most of the Bunker Hill housing project, and the recently completed Charles Newtowne 236 housing development (only partially occupied during 1970 Census). Outside of these housing developments, the area's residences are predominantly two- and three-family wood row houses. The majority of these structures are in fair or poor condition, with evidence of deterioration concentrated in the vicinity of the Bunker Hill housing project. Approximately 55% of the area's dwelling units required fix-up over $1,000 in 1973. Despite these conditions, the area shows strong signs of residential stability; 32% of the dwelling units are owner-occupied, and 62% of the people living in the area have resided in the same house for five or more years. 41% of the area's dwelling units are in one- or two-family houses. Some of the older houses show signs of new investment, and several new single family dwellings have been built in the area on land assembled by the city's urban renewal program. The area experienced a 28% decrease in population between 1960 and 1970, compared with the district-wide decrease of 25%. The median family income for the area is $6,196-10,100, ranging from low to fairly high compared with the district as a whole. This area has the lowest percentage (18%) of families with incomes under $5,000, however; the comparable district-wide percentage is 29%. The area has a stable housing market and has retained its character of a working class family neighborhood.

THE NECK

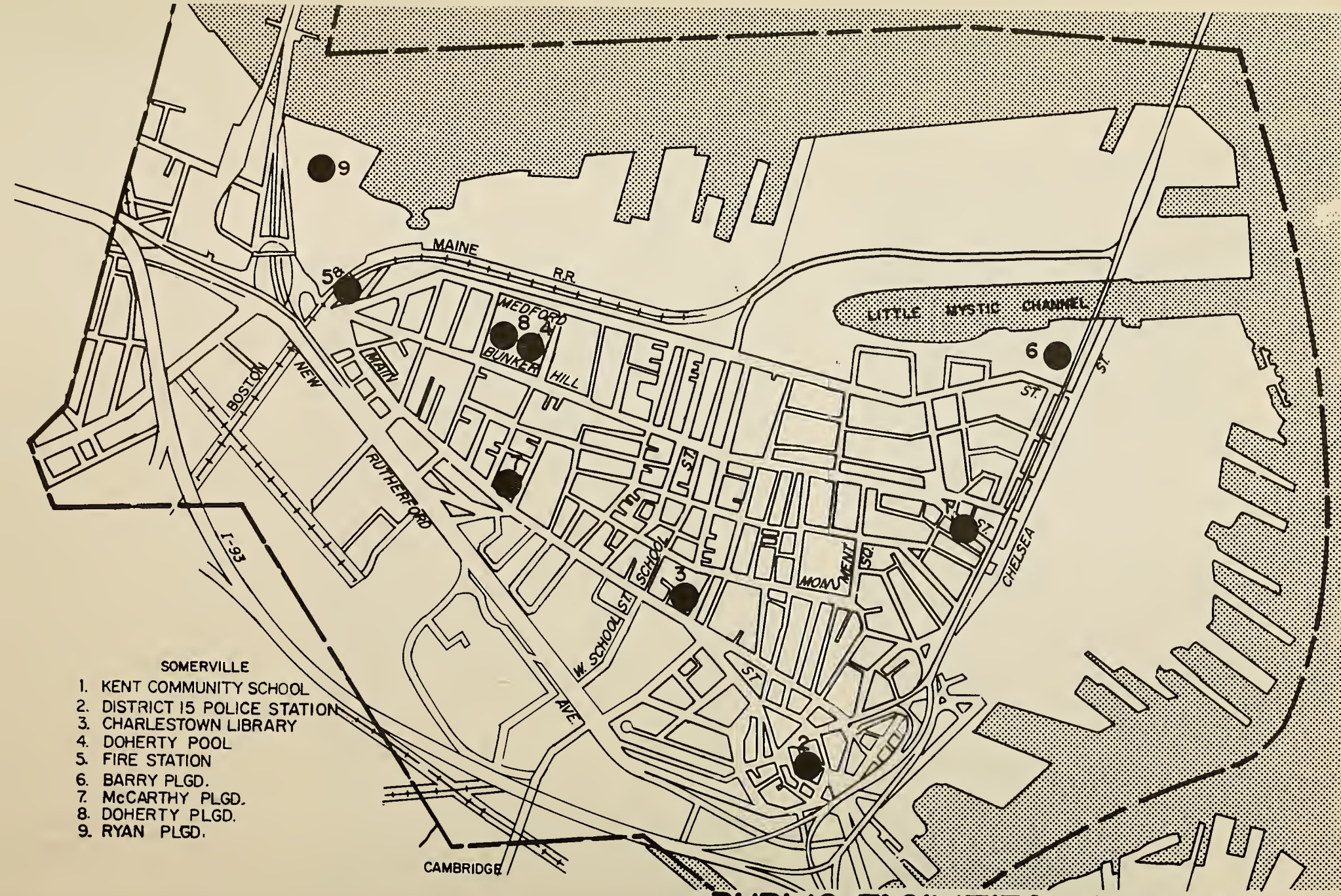
The Neck area is the extreme western section of Charlestown, physically separated from the rest of the town by Rutherford Avenue (a major arterial road) and Sullivan Square. It includes some industrial land, some automobile-oriented commercial development

along Cambridge Street, and a very small residential neighborhood. The dominant housing type is detached frame one- and two-family houses, which include 49% of the area's dwelling units; there are also a few six-unit apartment structures and several three-family houses. The majority of the area's housing is well-maintained and in fair condition; 48 units (less than a third of the neighborhood's total) required fix-up over $1,000 in 1973. Because the Neck was not included in the urban renewal project boundaries, it has not been eligible for federal rehabilitation assistance. The Neck has a relatively high proportion of owner-occupied units (41%), and 42% of the area's population have lived in the same unit for five or more years. The area has what might be called a moderate housing market, with no significant increase in resale values or rent levels in recent years. The Neck has a low median income of $7,406 and an extremely high proportion (43%) of families with incomes less than $5,000. The area experienced a dramatic 43% loss of population between 1960 and 1970, due in large part to demolition of many of its residential structures necessitated by construction of the new Sullivan Square terminal and Orange Line.

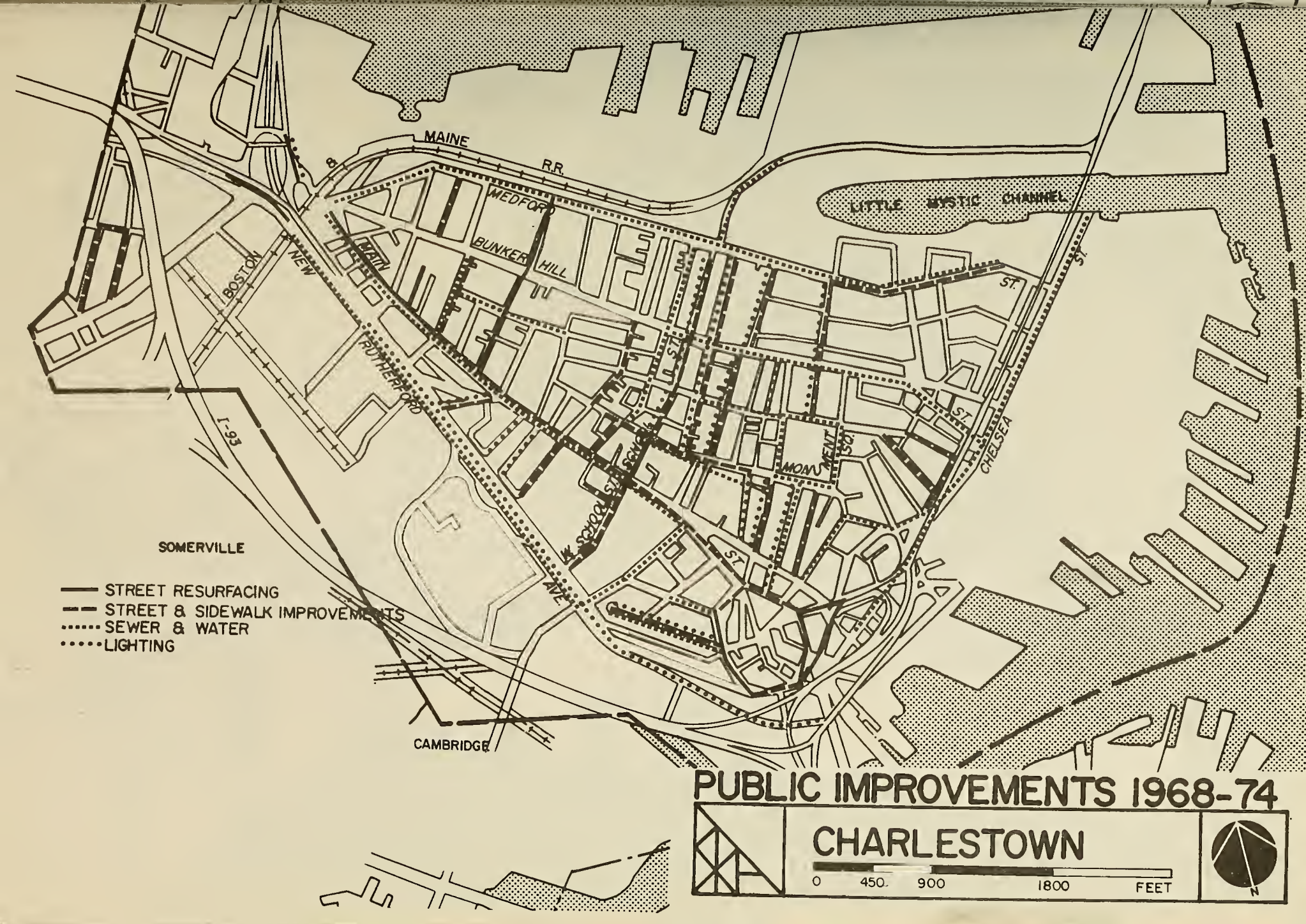
PAST PUBLIC INVESTMENT

Capital expenditures in Charlestown have increased markedly since the inception of the urban renewal program. Although the renewal plan was approved in 1965, the great bulk of capital expenditures has been made since 1968. Over $1,000,000 was spent on necessary demolition work; and between 1968 and 1974, the BRA and city departments made a combined total of over $18,000,000 in capital investment in the town. Much of this total amount was spent on needed infrastructure improvements. Approximately $5,300,000 has been spent on street and sidewalk reconstruction, $275,000 on street resurfacing, $3,370,000 sewer replacement, $2,000,000 on new water lines, and over $770,000 on street lighting. In addition to these improvements, almost $7,000,000 has been spent on public facilities and the construction and improvement of recreational facilities. New construction includes the Kent Community School, the Charlestown Library, the Charlestown Fire Station near Sullivan Square, the Doherty Pool, and the McCarthy Playground. Improvements have been made to the Barry, Doherty, and Ryan Playgrounds, as well as to the District 15 Police Station.

Public investment in housing in Charlestown has been in three forms: the leased housing program, new construction, and federally-assisted rehabilitation. There are 98 leased housing units in Charlestown; 80 are located in the recently constructed Charles Newtowne development, and 18 units are scattered throughout the district. Two major housing developments subsidized under the federal 236 program have been constructed in Charlestown in recent years: Mishawum Park, which includes 337 units, and Charles Newtowne, which includes 182 units in addition to the 80 units that are now leased housing. The Boston Housing Authority has constructed 96 units of elderly housing in low density structures scattered throughout the town. These new housing developments provide good, attractive housing for middle income families and elderly individuals. In addition, the BRA sold cleared land within renewal boundaries to private developers, who have constructed 38 units of market housing. As an urban renewal area, Charlestown became eligible for federal rehabilitation loans and grants. Over $7,000,000 of public funds have been expended under this program in Charlestown, resulting in the rehabilitation of 811 residential and mixed residential/commercial structures, a total of 1,525 housing units. The public funds spent on housing rehabilitation represent only a fraction of the total investment triggered by these programs. Public investment in Charlestown has helped to reverse the trend of deterioration and to restore the neighborhood's attractiveness and "livability."



PUBLIC FACILITIES 1968-74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SOMERVILLE
CAMBRIDGE
CHELSEA
MONUMENT
SCHOOL
ST.
AVE.
STREET RESURFACING
STREET & SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS
SEWER & WATER
LIGHTING
PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS 1968-74
CHARLESTOWN
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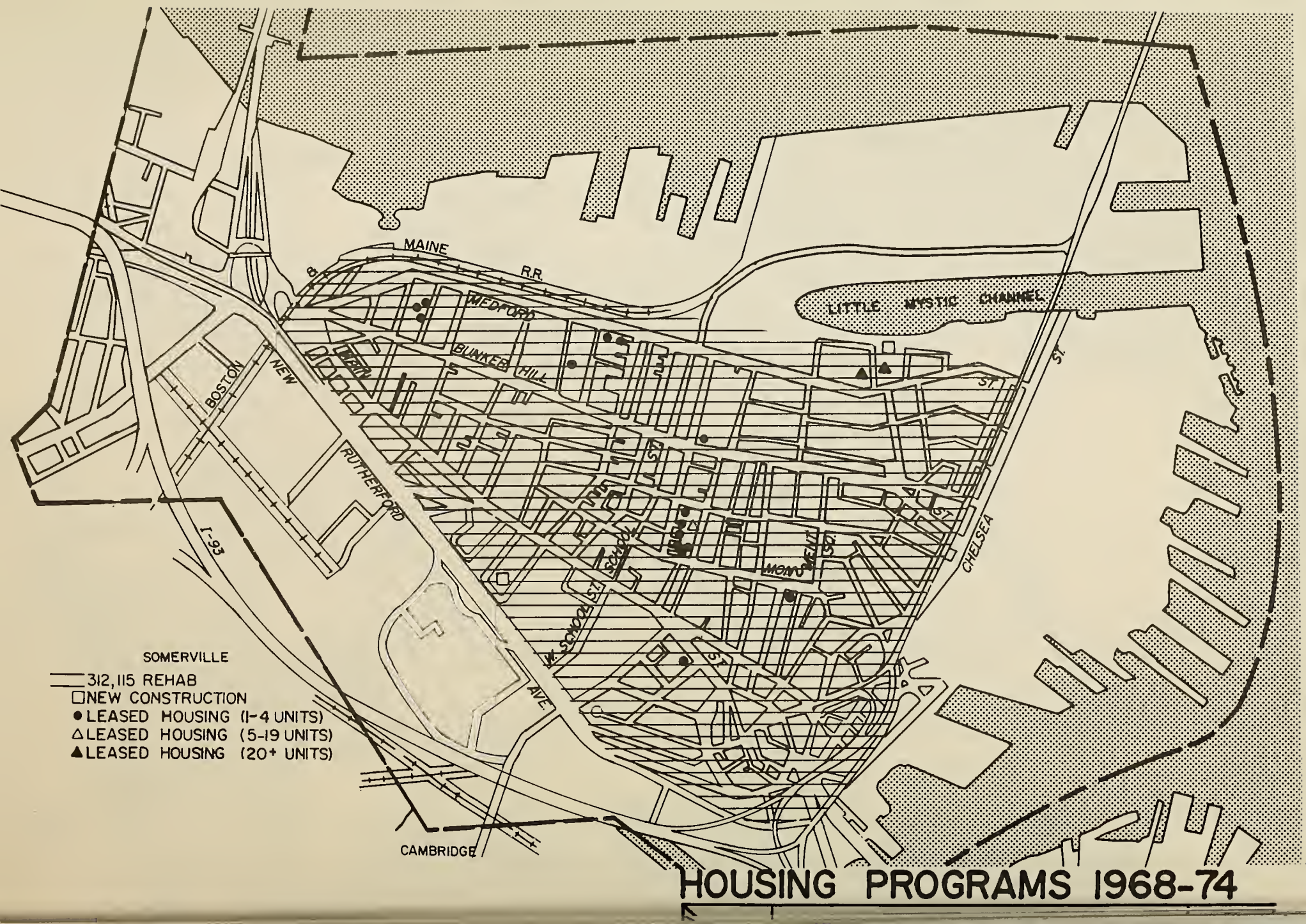
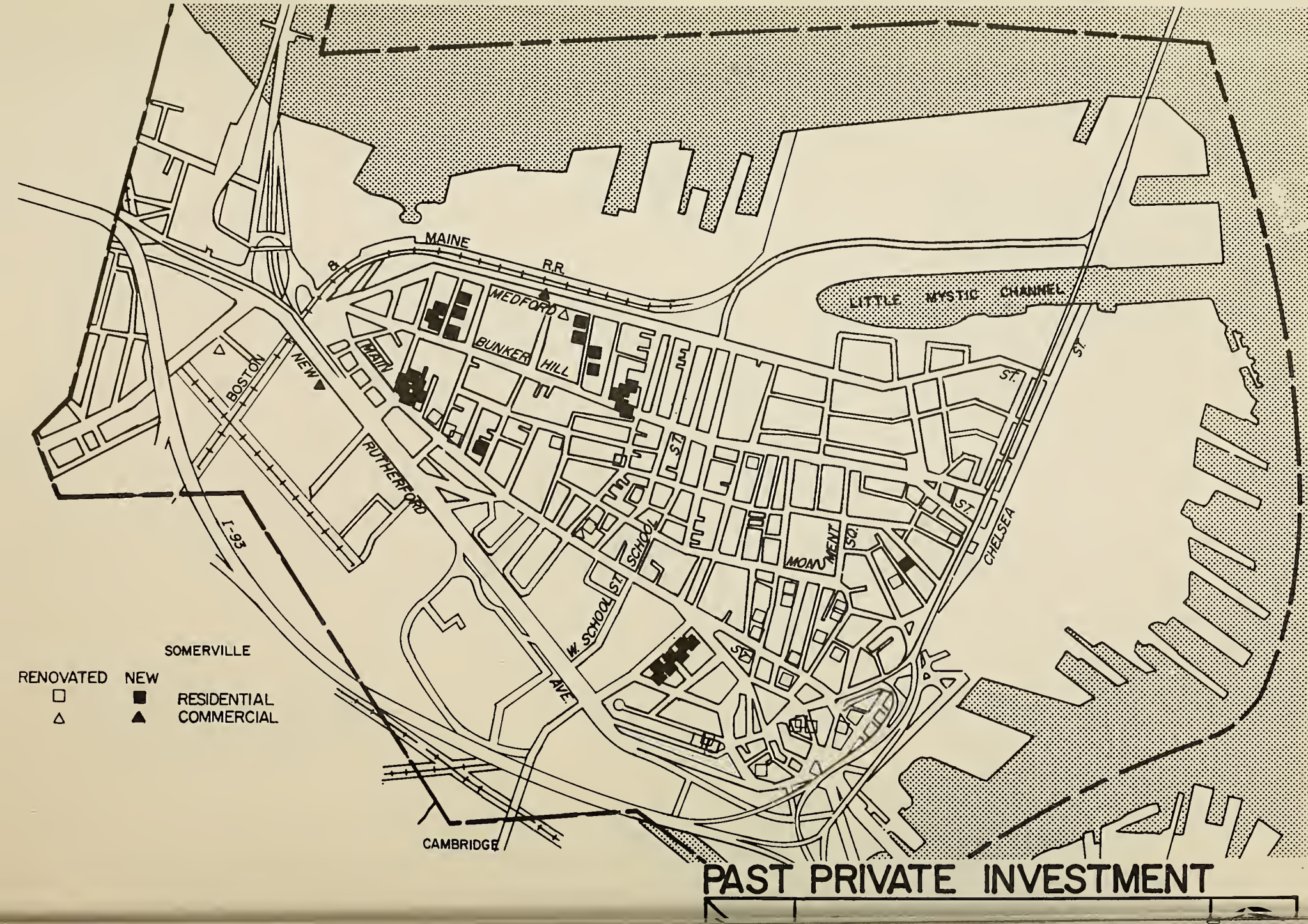


HOUSING PROGRAMS 1968-74

PAST PRIVATE INVESTMENT

A review of building permits for construction activity in excess of $10,000 from 1968-74 shows evidence of commercial and residential investment in Charlestown. Most of this investment has been in residential buildings. Aside from a cluster of new residences on Austin Street, the majority of new residential construction has taken place in the Medford Street area, along side streets intersecting Main and Bunker Hill Streets. Most of the residential rehabilitations and conversions, on the other hand, have occurred in the Town Hill/Monument area and along Main Street opposite Mishawum Park. The only instance of new commercial construction which appears in the building permits is on Rutherford Avenue near Sullivan Square. The four commercial rehabilitations which appear are scattered throughout the district.



PAST PRIVATE INVESTMENT

ISSUES AND PRELIMINARY STRATEGIES

1. HOUSING QUALITY

Issues

Although many residential structures have been rehabilitated since 1968 as a result of urban renewal activity and the availability of federal loans and grants, there is still a great need for rehabilitation assistance in Charlestown. Close to half of the town's dwelling units required fix-up exceeding $1000 in 1973. Because of rising costs, some Charlestown homeowners have been unable to make necessary repairs to their property, despite the availability of loans and grants and incentives offered by the Mayor's Housing Improvement Program. Those who are financially able to rehabilitate their houses require expert technical assistance to ensure that serious structural problems and code violations are corrected and that the work enhances rather than obscures the buildings' historic and architectural character. The Bunker Hill housing project, which is in deteriorated condition and frequently subject to vandalism, exerts an influence on surrounding housing which discourages rehabilitation activity.

Because of its nearness to downtown, attractive settings and well-built housing, Charlestown overall is experiencing a shortage of sellers rather than buyers; and resale values and rent levels have been rising more rapidly than in most communities in the metropolitan area. This phenomenon is creating a problem in rental housing. Because of higher monthly costs, such as mortgage and tax payments, incurred when property changes hands, some new owners find it impossible to maintain low rents and existing tenants may be forced out. An important issue is how to preserve Charlestown's housing stock without losing the neighborhood's long-time residents.

Strategy

Public assistance is required in order for existing homeowners to rehabilitate their houses. The continued availability of federal rehabilitation loans and grants together with the cash rebate offered by the Housing Improvement Program should provide necessary financial help for many Charlestown residents. These programs also provide much needed technical assistance to direct rehabilitation effort toward correcting serious structural problems and code violations, to advise homeowners on dealing with contractors or making repairs themselves, and to suggest ways that houses can be economically rehabilitated to enhance their basic historic or architectural character. A strong public information effort is needed so that Charlestown residents become aware of the availability and the details of these programs, including the fact that participation will not subject them to property reassessment. At least initially, these efforts should be concentrated in the Neck area, which has not been eligible for federal rehabilitation assistance.

For some homeowners, the financial assistance offered by federal loans and HIP is not sufficient and a deeper rehabilitation subsidy is required. In addition, major public investment is required to rehabilitate the deteriorated Bunker Hill housing project and facilitate maintenance in the future.

2. COMMERCIAL AREA CHANGES

Issues

Because of loss of population, competition with outlying shopping centers, the blighting influence of the elevated transit line on Main Street, and the threat of vandalism and robbery, the commercial areas of Charlestown have declined. In the Thompson Square area and on Bunker Hill Street, retail and service establishments have been physically abandoned and boarded up. Although there is need for neighborhood commercial establishments in Charlestown, many residents view Thompson Square and Bunker Hill Street as unattractive and unsafe places to shop. The issue is how to improve these areas and their image in the community so that Charlestown can have again thriving commercial areas which serve the neighborhood's needs.

Strategy

A combination of public and private effort is needed to revitalize the commercial areas of Charlestown. Demolition of the elevated, construction of the new shopping center, and the initiation of the police foot patrol program in 1975 are major steps; but public investment is still required to improve the safety and attractiveness of Main and Bunker Hill Streets. Streets and sidewalks in these areas should be reconstructed, trees should be planted, and street lights and street furniture (e.g. - benches, trash barrels) should be installed. If found to be effective, the police foot patrol program should be continued and expanded, and other means of improving safety should be explored. The city should also work with local business associations to set up a storefront rehabilitation program.

3. CAPITAL INVESTMENT NEEDS

Issues

As approved in 1965, the Urban Renewal Plan for Charlestown called for reconstruction of almost all streets within the project boundaries and construction of a number of new public facilities. Although alot of work has been done to date, many streets have yet to be done and a number of public facilities (including the new high school, a new elementary school and a new fire station) have yet to be built.

Despite recent investment, many of the parks and recreational facilities in Charlestown are poorly maintained and in bad repair. The need for better lighting, rehabilitation of facilities and general landscaping and restoration work is obvious in the neighborhood's playgrounds as well as in historic parks and cemeteries which will be visited by tourists. There is currently a shortage of usable open space and active recreational facilities in the vicinity of Charles Newtowne and the Bunker Hill housing project. Residents have expressed the need for more play areas for small children, for active recreational facilities (specifically tennis courts) for adults and for more passive facilities to service the elderly. Residents are also concerned that they are unable to enjoy Charlestown's extensive waterfront, because of lack of safe pedestrian access and recreation land along the water.

Because of demolition work and occasional fires, there are a lot of vacant lots in Charlestown. Many of these are not maintained and are eyesores and safety hazards for the community.

Strategy

Charlestown's capital investment needs, as outlined above, must be met if the goal of restoring residents' confidence is to be fully achieved. Many capital improvements are scheduled for 1975, including street and sidewalk reconstruction, tree planting and installation of street lights, construction of the high school complex, assembly of land for the new elementary school, restoration of vacant lots, and improvements to several existing playgrounds. The coordinated effort of the BRA, PFD, Little City Hall and the Parks and Recreation Department is necessary to ensure that remaining capital investments (including residential street improvements, new fire station, new elementary school, restoration of vacant lots, improvements to existing recreational facilities, and construction of Little Mystic Playground and other new recreational facilities) will be made and that existing and new facilities will be properly maintained in the future.

4. SOCIAL SERVICE NEEDS

Issues

The youth in Charlestown have special needs, which have not been adequately served by existing facilities or programs. A comprehensive and coordinated system of public and private effort is required to identify and meet those needs. The elderly have special service needs too. Although some of their needs are met by local agencies, others, notably a safe and convenient means of getting around town, cannot currently be met without public assistance.

Strategy

The 1975 investment program includes purchase of a mini-bus to be operated by the Kent Community School for elderly transportation. If this project is successful, it should be continued and if necessary expanded in the future. The city, through its Little City Hall and planning department, should be aware of service needs in Charlestown and should offer assistance to community groups in planning and securing funding for service programs and facilities.

5. TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS

Issues

Several major highways, including I-93, the central artery and the Tobin Bridge, run along the periphery of the community. For the most part, these improvements serve suburban commuters and through traffic rather than residents and workers of Charlestown. The expressways have caused problems of noise and air pollution. Construction of the Tobin Bridge in the 1950's caused Chelsea Street to be severed and the low level bridge which crossed the Little Mystic Channel to be demolished. Because of these changes and the awkward and hazardous artery ramps, trucks are forced to use residential streets such as Lowney Way and Medford Street. Traffic congestion is a problem on Main Street, where cars must weave their way through the supports of the elevated structure, and in City Square, where local and through-traffic intermingle with a minimum of control. These areas are hazardous for pedestrians and motorists alike.

Additional problems have been created by the relocation of the Orange line, which while a blighting influence provided good rapid transit service for community residents. Transit service is now being provided primarily by buses which, unlike rail transit, are subject to traffic congestion and severe delay during peak hours. A major issue is how to ease the transition from rail transit to buses and to provide safe, convenient and quick transit service for the Charlestown community.

Strategy

The city must provide improved truck access to industrial areas in order to remove truck traffic from residential streets. A proposed pair of transportation improvements, the Water/Chelsea Streets connector and Little Mystic Bridge, are currently being studied under a contract jointly sponsored by BRA and Massport. The city should be prepared to contribute its share of funding to implement these improvements if they are deemed to be feasible. Some traffic and parking improvements are being made in 1975 to ease congestion in Charlestown. Major effort is still required to redesign City Square; the confusion and congestion at this intersection is expected to worsen when the elevated structure is removed. Additional planning and public effort are required to improve pedestrian access and safety in the town. In order to assure good transit service for people who live and work in Charlestown, the city should work with the community and the MBTA on bus routes and schedules; exclusive bus lanes and passenger loading platforms are now being studied.

6. MAJOR POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT

Issues

Three sites in Charlestown have the potential for major redevelopment: the Navy Yard, Sullivan Square, and the land north of the Little Mystic Channel. The Navy Yard, which includes approximately 84 acres of land and 46 acres of water as well as many buildings of historical and architectural importance, was officially closed in the spring of 1973. Since then, the National Park Service has acquired the westernmost 26 acres as one of seven sites to be included in the Boston National Historic Park. The BRA and the Boston Economic Development and Industrial Commission have been working together along with a local task force to produce realistic proposals for reusing the remainder of the yard and to interest potential redevelopers. Proposals which have been considered to date include industrial, residential, commercial, institutional and recreational uses.

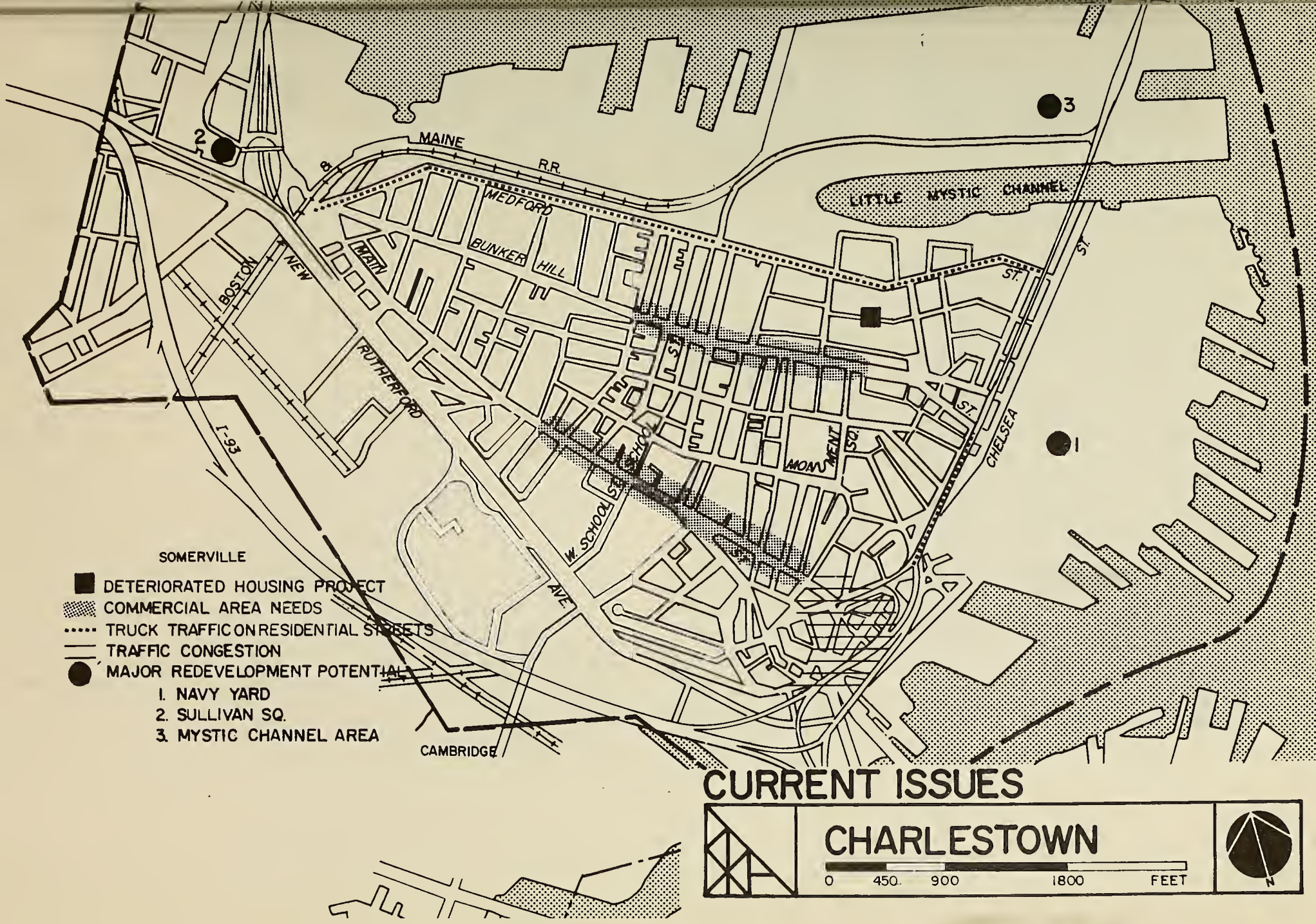
The old Sullivan Square transit terminal and some of the surrounding land owned by the MBTA are no longer being used because of the relocation of the Orange Line and construction of the new terminal. Although the MBTA has plans to develop part of the site for a new bus garage and related facilities, some land may be available for redevelopment. Interest in the site has been expressed by the Parks and Recreation Department, the Public Facilities Department, a local special service agency and individuals in the community. Special problems in reusing the site include traffic congestion, lack of pedestrian access, and distance from the residential community.

The area north of the Little Mystic Channel includes a variety of industrial and port-related uses, Boston's primary containerport, and some land owned by the Penn-Central Railroad. The Penn-Central land is currently under-utilized, and Massport has expressed interest in expanding its container facilities. Expansion of containerized shipping on this site and other sites in Boston has been under study by the BRA. Special problems in expanding development in this area include inadequate access for automobiles and trucks.

Strategy

All three of these sites present exciting long-range potential for redevelopment. The issue is to produce and promote sound redevelopment proposals which will benefit Charlestown and the City of Boston as a whole, with careful planning to solve special problems and avoid disruption of the community. The BRA should continue its coordinated effort with EDIC and the

resident task force on reuse proposals for the Navy Yard. The planning department should take the initiative to study and develop a master plan for the Sullivan Square MBTA lands while continuing to meet with interested groups and individuals from the community and public agencies. Working with Massport and a local task force (not yet formally established), planners should carefully review the containerport expansion proposal and assess related costs and benefits to Charlestown and the city as a whole. Any plans for this area should incorporate community needs and practical planning considerations.



CURRENT ISSUES

E. 1975 INVESTMENT PROGRAM

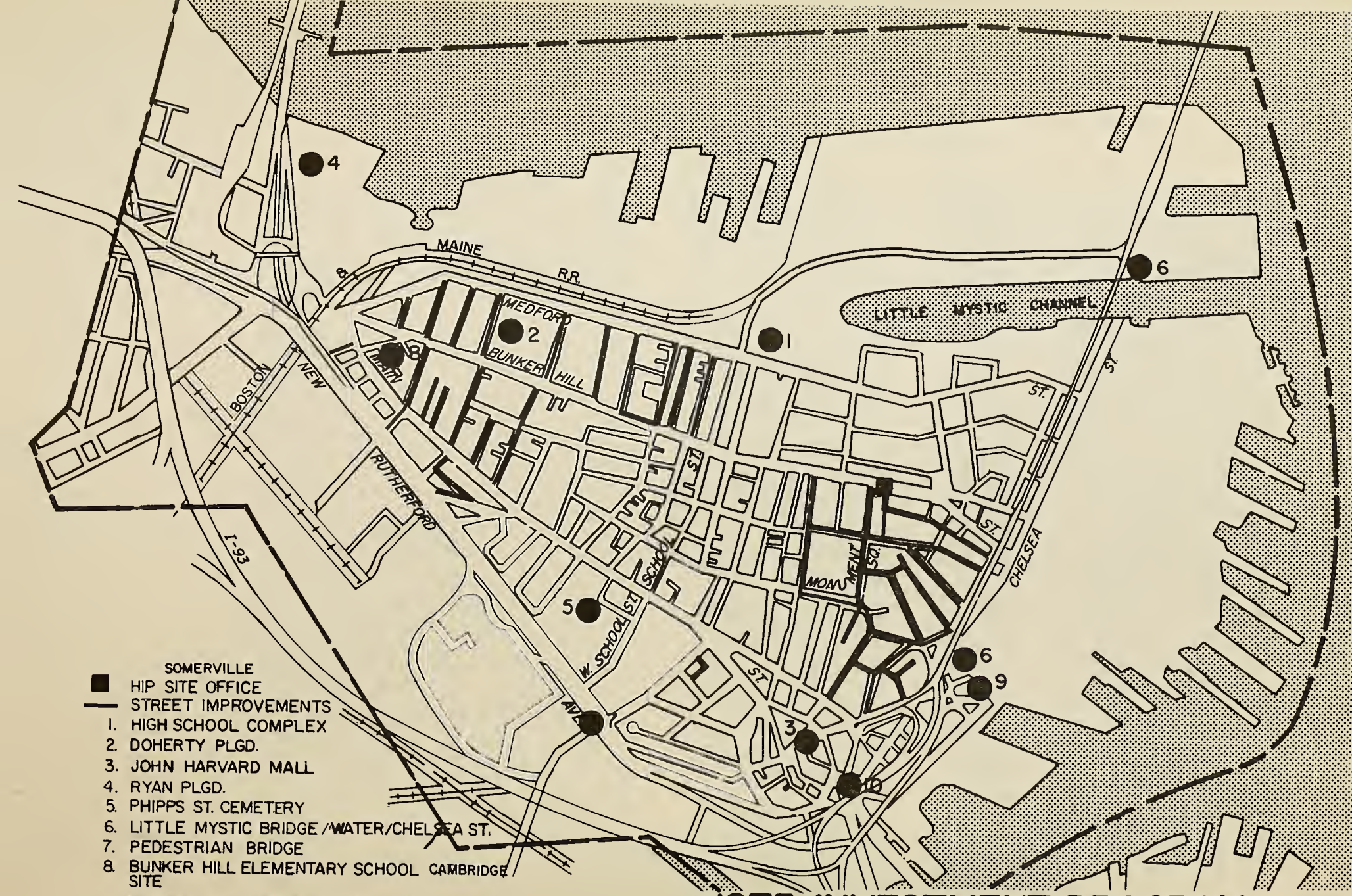
The 1975 program in Charlestown includes a wide range of investments utilizing city, state and federal resources. A major component of the 1975 investment program for housing is the Housing Improvement Program, which provides financial incentives and technical assistance for the rehabilitation of owner-occupied residential structures with 1-6 units. A site office for the administration of this program will be established in Charlestown, and funds have been reserved for the rehabilitation of approximately 100 buildings. Although the entire district is included in the program, effort will be made to target the Neck area, which has been ineligible for federal rehabilitation loans and grants. Some federal funds will continue to be available in 1975 for rehabilitation loans and grants within the renewal project boundaries. In addition, the BRA is scheduled to assemble parcels of land for new private residential development.

Included in the investment program for commercial area improvements is the assembly and disposition of parcels for new commercial development. The police foot patrol program, initiated in 1975, should help to improve safety of the commercial areas in the minds of merchants and customers alike. In addition, construction of the new shopping center at Thompson Square and the previously funded demolition of the elevated on Main Street should get underway in 1975. The combination of these improvements is expected to spur commercial rehabilitation and development in Charlestown, especially along Main Street.

Residential street work is a major component of the 1975 capital improvement program. A portion or the entire length of 38 streets in Charlestown will undergo street and sidewalk reconstruction or resurfacing, separation of storm and sanitary drainage systems, tree planting and the installation of street lights. Although planning work on the new Bunker Hill Elementary School has been delayed because of judicial review, during 1975 the BRA will assemble the necessary parcels to be conveyed to the Public Facilities Department. PFD will undertake construction of the new Charlestown High School complex, including the athletic facility already under construction. In addition, the city will do restoration work, including landscaping, tree planting and lighting, to the Doherty Playground, the Ryan Playground, the Phipps Street Cemetery and the John Harvard Mall. Plans for the mall, which were revised in accordance with community wishes, concentrate improvements in the upper portion along Harvard Street and include an active play area for children. During 1975 the city will also build two tennis courts on a site within the residential neighborhood.

The 1975 investment program for traffic and parking improvements includes assembly and disposition of parcels for City Square improvements and provision of parking for visitors to the Boston National Historic Park, as well as funds for building a pedestrian bridge over Rutherford Avenue at Austin Street. In addition, the BRA and Massport are jointly funding the environmental impact statement and preliminary design work for the proposed Little Mystic Bridge and Water/Chelsea Streets connector. This pair of transportation improvements is expected to reduce heavy truck traffic on residential streets and to improve access to the containerport.

The investment program also includes purchase of a mini-bus for elderly transportation (to be operated by the Kent School) and funds for the improvement of approximately 25 vacant lots in Charlestown.



1975 INVESTMENT PROGRAM

CHARLESTOWN

Issue	Strategy	1975 Investment Program	Future Investment Needs
Housing quality	Preservation of housing stock HIP 312 loans and 115 grants	HIP-$150,000 312/115-as available	HIP-minimum 200 units per year
	Technical rehab assistance	HIP and BRA staff service	HIP and BRA staff services
	Deep rehabilitation subsidy		Funds for deeper subsidy
	Rehabilitate & maintain Bunker Hill Housing project		Bring housing up to code; regular maintenance; improved security measures
Commercial area changes	Strengthen business organization to direct revitalization effort		Commercial revitalization program (see details below)
	Improve attractiveness of Bunker Hill Street commercial area		Street & sidewalk improvements, lights, trees, street furniture Storefront rehab incentive
	Improve attractiveness of Main Street commercial area	Demolition of elevated-previously funded (MBTA)	Street & sidewalk improvements, lights, trees, street furniture Storefront rehab incentive
	Improve safety of commercial areas	Police foot patrol	Expand street patrol program Robbery suppression unit Improved street lighting (see above)
	Encourage new commercial development	Land assembly-$33,600 Construction of new shopping center-private funds	
Capital investment needs	Improve streets and sidewalks in residential areas	Street and sidewalk improvements, trees and lighting $5,000,000	Street & sidewalk improvements, lights and trees where needed (e.g.-the Neck and Town Hill)

G. FUTURE INVESTMENT NEEDS as related to issues, strategies and 1975 Investment Program

Issue	Strategy	1975 Investment Program	Future Investment Needs
Capital investment needs (cont.)	Construction of new public facilities	Land assembly for elementary school-$276,500 Construction of new high school complex-$15,000,000 Stage II Community College-state funded project	New fire station near Navy Yard New elementary school
	Construction of new recreation facilities	Tennis courts	Construction of Little Mystic Playground Additional tennis courts, play areas for children, facilities for elderly and youth recreation Public access to waterfront Paul Revere Landing Park
	Rehabilitation & maintenance of existing recreation facilities	Improvements to: Doherty Playground-$170,000 Harvard Mall-$100,000 Ryan Playground-$100,000 Phipps St. Cemetery-$75,000	Improvements to Barry Playground Improvements to Harvard Mall Regular maintenance of facilities
	Restoration & reuse of vacant lots	Vacant lot improvements-$25,000	Sale and restoration of vacant lots
Social Service needs	Meet special service needs of residents	Mini-bus for elderly transportation	
Transportation problems	Provide improved truck access to industrial areas and remove truck traffic from residential streets	Little Mystic Bridge & Water/Chelsea Sts. connector EIS-$115,000 (BRA/Massport joint funding)	Funding of proposed improvements (Urban Systems)

Issue	Strategy	1975 Investment Program	Future Investment Needs
Transportation problems (cont.)	Ease traffic congestion and improve pedestrian safety	Traffic & parking improvements-$196,860 Pedestrian bridge Rutherford at Austin St.-$200,000 Demolition of elevated-previously funded	City Square redesign & improvements (Urban Systems) Pedestrain bridge Rutherford Ave. near Essex Street
	Provide good transit service for residents and workers		Improved bus service and passenger loading areas Exclusive bus lanes
Major potential redevelopment	Redevelopment of Navy Yard		Depending on proposal: acquisition of land, building rehab & demolition, infrastructure, development incentives, creation of public access & amenities
	Redevelopment of Sullivan Square		Depending on proposal: acquisition of land, building rehab & demolition, infrastructure, development incentives

G. FUTURE INVESTMENT NEEDS as related to issues, strategies and 1975 Investment Program

Issue	Strategy	1975 Investment Program	Future Investment Needs
Major potential redevelopment)cont.)	Redevelopment of land north of Mystic Channel		Related transportation improvements

Report Binder
Stock No./Color

80571	Black
80572	Lt. Blue
80573	Dk. Blue
80578	Rust
80579	Exec. Red

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